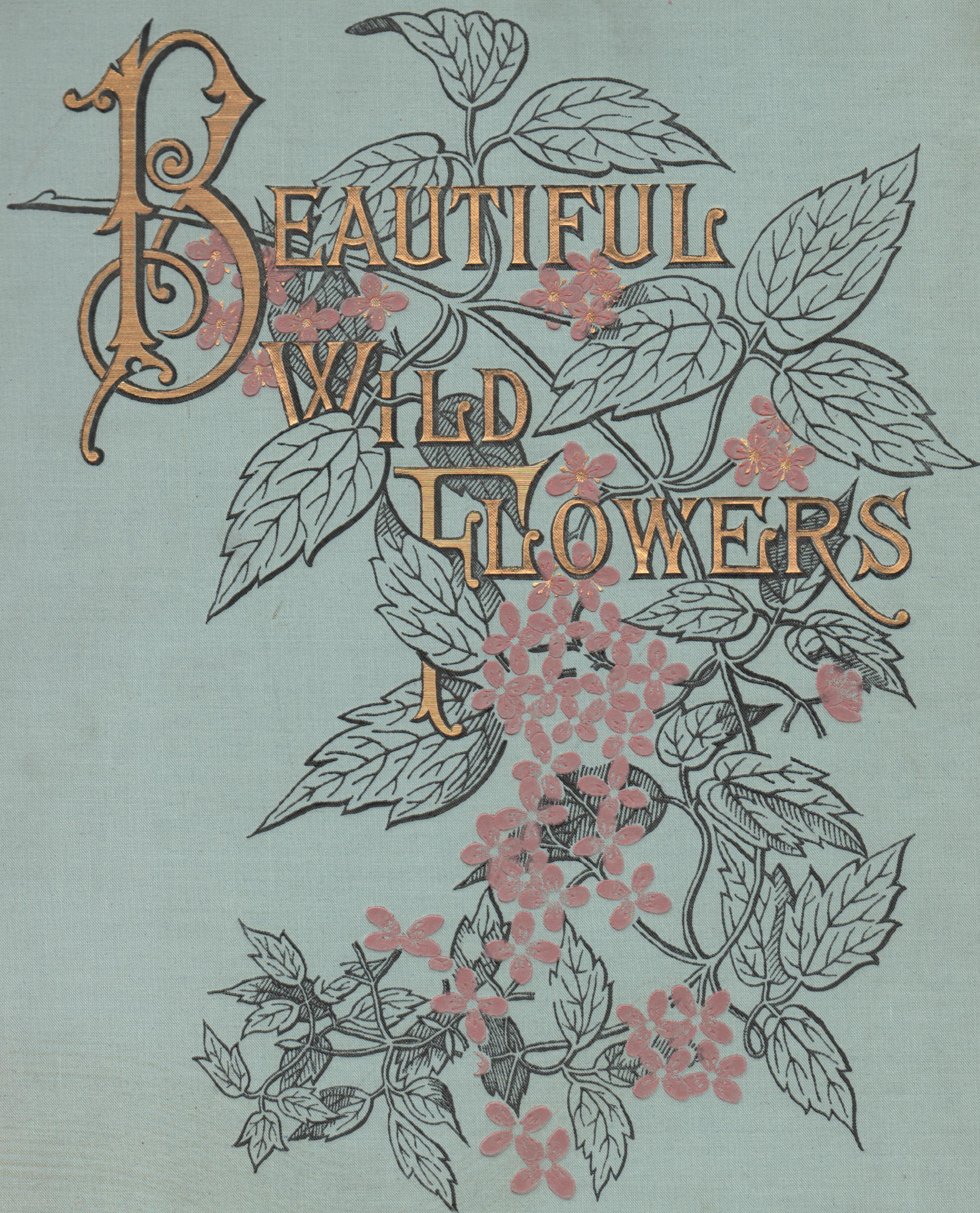




BEAUTIFUL WILD FLOWERS



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1887







BEAUTIFUL WILD FLOWERS.







BEAUTIFUL WILD FLOWERS

OF

AMERICA.

FROM

ORIGINAL WATER-COLOR DRAWINGS AFTER NATURE,

By ISAAC SPRAGUE.

DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BY REV. A. B. HERVEY.

WITH EXTRACTS FROM

*LONGFELLOW, WHITTIER, BRYANT, HOLMES, AND OTHERS.*

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1887.



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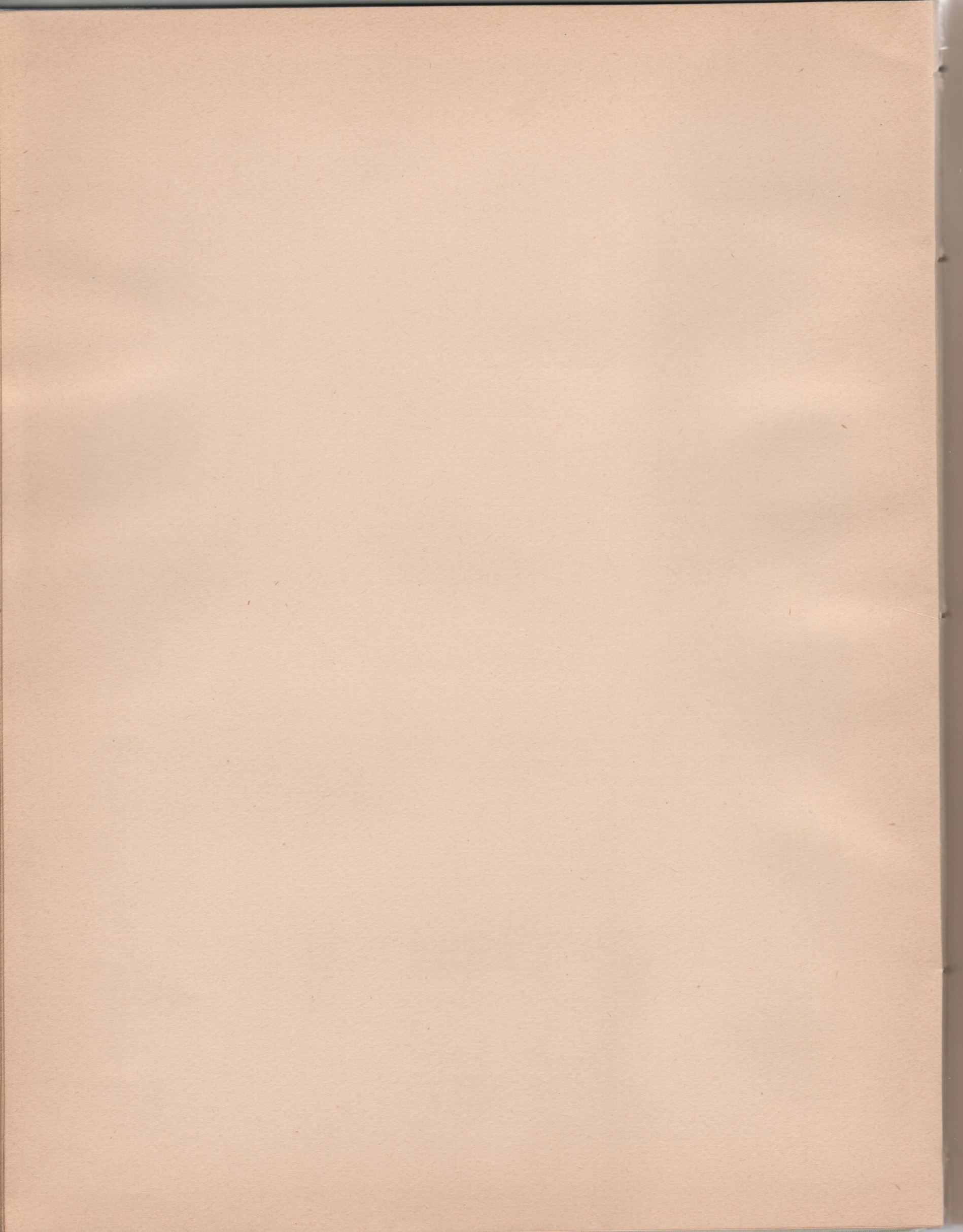


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THE WILD COLUMBINE.











# THE WILD COLUMBINE

BY J. H. COOPER

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON: J. H. COOPER

1851

THE WILD COLUMBINE

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# THE WILD COLUMBINE.

*AQUILEGIA CANADENSIS, L.*

---

Thou smiling Spring! again thy praise  
Is on the lip of streams;  
And the waterfalls loud anthems raise,  
By day, and in their dreams;  
The lakes that glitter on the plain  
Sing with the stirring breeze;  
And the voice of welcome sounds again  
From the surge upon the seas.

*Rockwell.*

"SMILING SPRING," in our northern climes, adorns itself with many floral gems. In the pages of this book, I shall have the pleasure of making my readers familiar with the forms of a few of the most beautiful of them. Among them all none can be ranked higher, for a certain grace of bearing and a peculiar delicacy as well as brilliancy of coloring, than the Wild Columbine. The green of the small three-lobed rounded leaves is singularly delicate and satisfying to the eye. The flower is elaborately constructed, with its yellow and pink petals prolonged into a bent spur behind, its dark-red sepals protrud-



#### THE WILD COLUMBINE.

ing like wings between; and its down-hanging brush of lengthened pistils and stamens, all pendent upon the slender stalk. As it dances in the gentle breezes, it makes a floral treasure that every wanderer in the spring woods or by "meadow's marge" will be glad to find. And you will find it in early spring, not seldom when few other flowers have come; when the "Adder's Tongue," the "Anemone," the "Blue Violets," and the "Sanguinaria," perhaps, will be its only companions. In the warm days of April or early May, before the trees have shaken out their new foliage to the breeze, when the bright sun pours its flood of light and warmth over all the land—over the brown pastures, and down through the shadeless woods, and the thick covering of crisp, dry leaves, the cast-off foliage of last year, stirs and crackles under your feet,—that is the time to go gathering Columbines.

It affects high places, and especially those edges of hill-tops where the rocks push themselves to the surface, and make precipitous steeps. Many a time I have found it thus, in profusion, on the high hills east of the Hudson, about Troy. And my memory of sundry walks, in warm spring days, when the spirit, weary with long months of toil, pent up in brick walls, so deeply enjoys the first glimpse again of the bright loving face of Nature, will be always associated with these charming flowers.

The Columbine of the English woodlands has been held sometimes, the poets say, as the symbol of sorrow and desolation.

"The Columbine, by lonely wanderers taken,  
Is then ascribed to such as are forsaken."



#### THE WILD COLUMBINE.

Mr. Thomas Meehan quotes an old play of Chapman, of the year 1600, in which reference is made to the Columbine as an emblem of ingratitude.

“What’s that — a Columbine?

No, that thankless flower grows not in my garden.”

But to me it is a flower associated neither with sorrow nor ingratitude, but with the memory of some of the most beautiful and sunny hours that have come to me in all this “pilgrimage.”

The Wild Columbine is a plant a foot or more high, slender, and sparingly branched, with not many leaves. The stem and branches are more or less tinged with pink. It may be found in blossom from April to June, in the North-eastern and Middle States. It takes kindly to cultivation, and may be transplanted into the garden. It was carried to Europe from this country for that purpose about the middle of the last century.

The spurs into which the petals are prolonged are the nectaries, or honey-pots, of the flower. The considerable length of these serves to test the strength, perseverance, or ingenuity of the bees or other insects who would rob the flower of its drops of sweetness. By this means also it compels the robber to serve its economy of reproduction. Being obliged to push and struggle hard to get his tongue into the bottom of the deep nectary, he is sure to get his hairy back covered all over with the flower-dust, or pollen, from the yellow anthers against which he so roughly brushes. So, when in search of more honey, he flies away to another Columbine, he will carry



#### THE WILD COLUMBINE.

a load of the fertilizing dust with him. Thus he helps to make the plant more fruitful, and secures plenty of flowers next year for the support, as we might suppose he understands it, of his own progeny.

Some insects, which are not large enough to reach the drop of nectar in the bottom of the vessel with their tongue, ingeniously go around on the outside, and with their sharp jaws cut a little hole through its wall, and take the honey out through that.

The Columbine to which the English poets refer is a purple flower, somewhat stouter than this one, not so long, and with the spurs more incurved at the end. It is the common Columbine of our gardens.

“ Make her a goodly chaplet of azure columbines,  
And wreathe about her coronet with sweetest eglantine,”

wrote Drayton three hundred years ago; and poor, crazed Ophelia gathers it to deck herself, saying in her plaintive way to Laertes,

“ There is fennel for you, and columbines.”

The name is said to be derived from *columba*, Latin for *dove*; or from *culvert-wort*, which was its earlier name, and is from Anglo-Saxon *culfre*, a dove, and *wort*, a plant. The appropriateness of the name and the allusion rests upon some fancied resemblance of its blue or purple petals to a circle of doves drinking or eating from the same dish; or, as some say, to the likeness of the separate petals, with the wing-like sepals spreading on each side, to a miniature dove.

The derivation of the name of the genus, *Aquilegia*, is a matter of dispute among botanists. Some say that it is derived from



#### THE WILD COLUMBINE.

Latin *aquila*, eagle, referring to the likeness which the cluster of bent spurs seems to bear to the talons of that lordly bird. Others derive it from *aqua*, water, and *ligo*, to collect, referring to the apparent design of the petals, with their deep wells, to collect water; which, by the way, they never do, for they always hang horizontal, or mouth downward. If this is the derivation of the word, it would seem more likely to have reference to the open seed-case, which, when ripe, stands erect and might easily serve the uses of a rain-catcher.

The Columbine has been a favorite, not only with the poets, but with the artists also, in the ages past. It appears not infrequently as an element of decorative art. It is found as a border upon an illuminated manuscript as early as the fifteenth century. It was at one time combined with the red rose, as a badge of the royal house of Lancaster. And long before that it had been associated with the more familiar Broom-flower, *Planta genista*, as the badge of the royal house which thence derived its historic name, Plantagenet.







THE FLOWER DE LUCE.















# THE FLOWER DE LUCE.

(LARGER BLUE FLAG.)

*IRIS VERSICOLOR, L.*

---

## THE RAINBOW.

Triumphal arch, that fill'st the sky  
When storms prepare to part,  
I ask not proud philosophy  
To teach me what thou art.

How glorious is thy girdle cast  
O'er mountain, tower, and town,  
Or mirrored in the ocean vast,  
A thousand fathoms down.

For, faithful to its sacred page,  
Heaven still rebuilds thy span;  
Nor lets the type grow pale with age,  
That first spoke peace to man.

*Campbell.*

PLUTARCH says the word *Iris* is from the Egyptian, and means "The Eye of Heaven." The Greeks named this plant from the Rainbow, which they called "Iris," in allusion to



#### THE FLOWER DE LUCE.

the mingling of brilliant colors in its blossom. Iris was also the goddess of the Rainbow, and the fair messenger of Juno, the latter being the goddess of the sky and clouds, and of the powers and phenomena of the air.

Iris was sent to earth bearing messages of peace to the children of men; she filled the clouds with water from the lakes and sea, and poured it in gentle showers again upon the fertile ground. And she it was who bordered every retreating storm-cloud with the gorgeous fringe of the rainbow, a symbol of peace and plenty.

Now overhead, a rainbow, bursting through  
The scattering clouds, shone, spanning the dark sea,  
Resting its bright base on the quivering blue.

— A heavenly chameleon,  
The airy child of vapor and the sun, •  
Brought forth in purple, cradled in vermilion,  
Baptized in molten gold, and swathed in dun,  
Glittering like crescents o'er a Turk's pavilion,  
And blending every color into one.

*Byron.*

Many legends tell how Juno made the Iris flower, among the few most beautiful of all the flowers of the field, to spring from the earth, in recognition of her much-loved and favorite Maid of Honor. So the chaste and beauteous Iris, the fleet messenger of the gods, has her perpetual memorial in the splendid bow of color which the storm projects upon the sky, and in this group of radiant flowers, which bespangle the green of meadow and forest over the mountains and valleys of two continents.

Louisa Ann Twamley tells a charming story of the meaning of the Iris. At one of the courts held by Flora,



### THE FLOWER DE LUCE.

All with their petals so fair,  
The gay flowers wreathed were.  
But 'midst them all  
Crowned at the rainbow festival,  
A sapphire-colored blossom shone  
The loveliest there; no other one  
Her jewels wore  
So gracefully. Her robe all o'er  
Was radiant, yet deep blue, like twilight sky,  
And softly shaded as when clouds do lie  
Upon the deep expanse. 'Twas strange none knew  
A name for this fair form, so bright and blue;  
But sister-flowerets fancifully said,  
As they to note her beauty had been led,  
By its enchantment in the rainbow shower,  
They e'en would call her IRIS from that hour.

Christian legend, not less than the Greek, has been busy with the Iris. Long centuries ago the "Flower de luce" was said to be a favorite with the Queen of Heaven, the Virgin Mother of Our Lord. The story is told of an old knight who, though very devout, was also very stupid. He could never retain in his memory more than two words of a prayer to the Lady Mother. These were "Ave Maria;" and with these he constantly addressed his prayer to Heaven. He was spending his last years in a convent, and the wordy monks there had unbounded contempt for a man with so limited a vocabulary of devotion, and they did not fail to let him know it. But the good old knight possessed his soul with patience, and night and day his simple prayer continued, till at last he died and was laid in the chapel yard of the convent,—when, as a proof of the acceptance of his brief though earnest prayer, a plant of the



#### THE FLOWER DE LUCE.

"Flower de luce" sprang up on his grave, displaying on every flower, in golden letters, the words "*Ave Maria*." The sight of this miracle induced the scoffing monks to open his grave, and they found the root of the plant resting on the lips of the good old soldier who lay mouldering there.

"The historical importance of the Iris," says Mr. Thomas Meehan, "is due to the fact that it became the national flower of France. As such it has acquired a world-wide reputation, under the name of 'Fleur de lis,' which is nothing but a corruption of 'Fleur de Louis.' But it had a political significance long before it was officially adopted by the kings of France. It was used as an emblem of the Byzantine emperors, although in what relation it does not now appear. The early Frankish kings also employed it. There is a legend, quoted by Prior, that a shield filled with these flowers was brought to King Clovis while engaged in battle. King Louis VII. adopted the flower in June, 1137, as the national emblem of France, possibly to perpetuate the memory of some such event."

The Larger Blue Flag of our swamps and meadows is, perhaps, the most brilliant representative of the genus growing on this continent. It has a wide geographical distribution, being found almost equally common and luxuriant from Maine to Minnesota, and from Arkansas to Florida. It grows two or three feet high in swampy or damp places. Its foliage consists of long, slender, sword-shaped leaves. It flowers in May and June. Our plate sufficiently represents the rare beauty and grace of the flower. A little study of its parts, in nature, will show how curiously it is contrived so as not to be fertilized by its own pollen; but with great ingeniousness is designed to be fruc-



#### THE FLOWER DE LUCE.

tified by pollen brought to it from other flowers, by the bees and other insects, who visit it in search of the drop of nectar which lies concealed in its heart. In "How Flowers Behave," Professor Gray has given an extremely interesting account of the methods and devices by which this is done.

I cannot close this account of one of the chief glories of our early-summer flora without quoting those exquisite lines addressed to this flower, from one of the sweetest poems with which Mr. Longfellow has enriched our literature.

#### FLOWER DE LUCE.

Beautiful lily, dwelling by still rivers  
Or solitary mere,  
Or where the sluggish meadow-brook delivers  
Its waters to the weir!

Born to the purple, born to joy and pleasance,  
Thou dost not toil nor spin,  
But makest glad and radiant with thy presence  
The meadow and the lin.

The wind blows, and uplifts thy drooping banner,  
And round thee throng and run  
The rushes, the green yeomen of thy manor,  
The outlaws of the sun.

Thou art the Iris, fair among the fairest,  
Who, armed with golden rod,  
And winged with the celestial azure, bearest  
The message of some god.



THE FLOWER DE LUCE.

Thou art the Muse, who, far from crowded cities,  
Hauntest the sylvan streams,  
Playing on pipes of reed the artless ditties  
That come to us as dreams.

O Flower de luce, bloom on, and let the river  
Linger to kiss thy feet !  
O flower of song, bloom on, and make forever  
The world more fair and sweet.



THE WILD ORANGE-RED LILY.

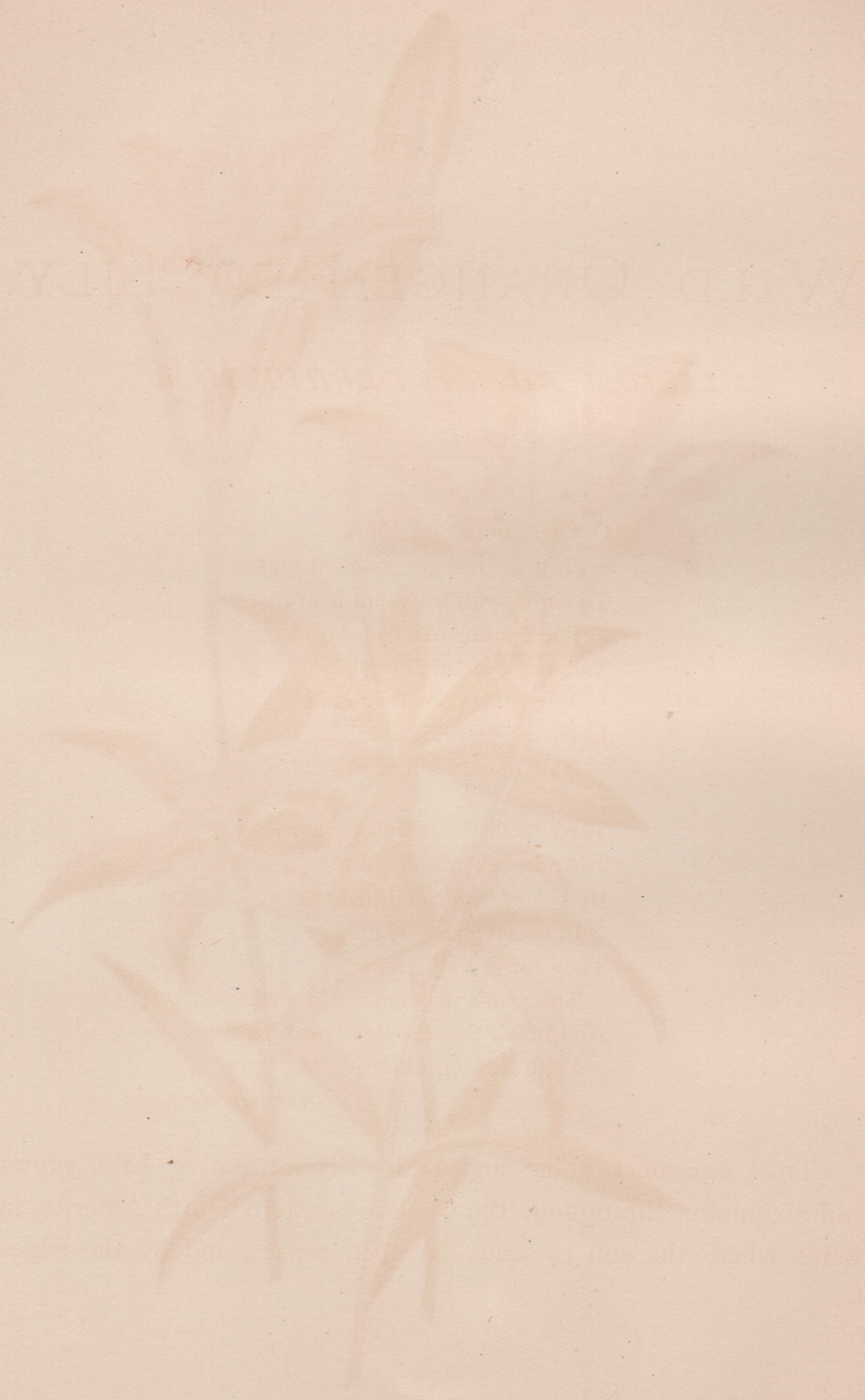














THE  
WILD ORANGE-RED LILY.

*LILIUM PHILADELPHICUM, L.*

---

O lilies, upturned lilies,  
How swift their prisoned rays  
To smite with fire from heaven  
The fainting August days !  
Tall urns of blinding beauty,  
As vestals pure they hold  
In each a blaze of scarlet,  
Half blotted out with gold.

Thro' trellised roadway edges,  
And open woodland range,  
By ruined walls and hedges,  
In every phase of change,  
They lift in holy vigils  
The year's unquenched desire,  
And break the moveless verdure  
With shifting lines of fire.

*Elaine Goodale.*

THIS, our most noble and truly elegant native Lily, grows quite common throughout the whole of eastern North America, in fields where the soil is sandy, in open copses, and by the edges



#### THE WILD ORANGE-RED LILY.

of the woods. The very beautiful and life-like representation of it which Mr. Sprague has given in the plate makes it quite unnecessary that I should enter into a particular description of its form or color. It is propagated by bulbs or seeds. It attains a height of two feet or more, and flowers in June and July. Its graceful form, with its upturned, open, brilliantly colored flower-cup, and slender pointed whorl of green leaves, is familiar to all lovers of Nature's floral gems.

It early attracted the attention of botanists in this country, and bulbs were sent by Mr. John Bertram, of Philadelphia, to Miller, a famous floriculturist of London, more than one hundred years ago. No doubt, also, it was from one of Bertram's plants that the great Linnæus named and described the species.

The Lily has been much admired in all ages, and has held a large place not only in literature and the symbolism of religion, but also in armorial and decorative art. Professor Meehan says the name of the Lily is contemporaneous with history, having been used by Homer, and meaning "the most charming of flowers." But the modern, not the Homeric name, *lily*, Professor Wittstein derives from the Celtic *li*, white, referring to the color of the best known species. While we find that the poet has given to the Lily the adoration of his heart and the loving tribute of his genius, in song and legend, it is not to be denied that it is most commonly the white Lily, and not our gorgeously-colored one, all red and gold, that has carried captive the poet's soul, as he has told in melodious verse how the

"Queen of the field, in a milk-white mantle drest,  
The lovely Lily waved her curling crest."



#### THE WILD ORANGE-RED LILY.

The author, just now referred to, quaintly tells us how the ancients gave to the Lily a miraculous origin, as, indeed, all do to-day, except the evolutionist, though not exactly by the same process as that believed in by the Greeks.

"It is said that a very excellent young goddess, Sylvia, who was as fair as she was good, had but a poor opinion of Jupiter, who paid his addresses to her. Jupiter was not accustomed to such rebuffs, and treated the fair lady rather roughly; but she being much shocked at such rudeness, her nose took suddenly to bleeding, and from a few drops which fell to the ground the red Lily sprung up. The white Lily is said to be a later creation, and to have sprung from the milk of Juno, and, we are sorry to say, when she was in a somewhat intoxicated condition from imbibing too freely of nectar." "Considering the more respectable origin of the red Lily," our author further remarks, "it seems scarcely just that most of the best lily-poetry has been given to the white."

Ever since He, who is called "The Lily of the Valley," said, warning men against over-anxiety, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these," the Lily has had a peculiar charm and interest for the Christian. He has always seen in it not only the emblem of a divine care, which regards the humblest creation with thoughtful solicitude, but also finds it ever keeping memory of One, who, though King of Heaven, found it no condescension to be a lover of fragrant flowers and tuneful birds.

The Lily has long been used as an emblem of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the great church which adores her.



THE WILD ORANGE-RED LILY.

"Seest thou that diadem bending low,  
As if modestly shunning its beauty to show?  
Look at those petals of silvery white,  
Girt round with a halo shining bright.

That lily is lovely, but lovelier still  
Was the flower that blossomed on Bethlehem's hill;  
And white as the snow though its petals are,  
That Virgin of virgins was fairer far."



THE WILD CLEMATIS.



THE WILD COUNTRY











# THE WILD CLEMATIS.

(VIRGIN'S BOWER.)

*CLEMATIS VIRGINIANA, L.*

---

Where the woodland streamlets flow,  
Gushing down a rocky bed,  
Where the tasselled alders grow,  
Lightly meeting overhead;  
When the fullest August days  
Give the richness that they know,  
Then the Wild Clematis comes,  
With her wealth of tangled blooms,  
Reaching up and drooping low.

*Dora Read Goodale.*

THE WILD CLEMATIS, or Virgin's Bower, is an attractive native vine, common in all our northern woodlands, especially by the side of brooks and on river banks. It blooms in July and August with an abundance of white, fragrant flowers, and in the fall, when the seeds are ripened, their plumed tails, fine, long, and feathery, cover the branches with a gray mist, like pale smoke. If gathered at the right time, the seeds somewhat firmly



#### THE WILD CLEMATIS.

adhere to the vine, and thus it becomes a favorite, along with autumn leaves, for interior decoration. The foliage of the growing plant, so finely represented in the plate, is extremely graceful and beautiful.

And her fresh leaves only shade  
That which is within her bower,  
Like a curtain, lightly made,  
Half to hide her virgin flower.

*D. R. G.*

So many curious and wonderful facts have recently been discovered in regard to the movement and behavior of plants, and especially, of climbing plants, that I think I can give my readers no greater pleasure than to make the Clematis the occasion for briefly detailing some of the more striking of them.

It is commonly thought that there is an essential, radical difference between the life of plants and animals. "There are differences of administrations, and diversities of gifts, but the same spirit." The more closely we observe the facts, and the more deeply we push our inquiries into the arcana of life, the more difficult we find it to make any division which shall separate the two at all points. Indeed, we are constantly being pressed toward the conclusion that life is one in all its forms,—that it, though

"Changed through all, is yet in all the same;  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

It was once thought that motion, or, at least, locomotion, was a distinctive mark of animal life. But in the microscopic world



#### THE WILD CLEMATIS.

innumerable plants are found which possess the power of locomotion in a high degree. And now we are assured that among the most highly organized growing plants, motion, and not rest, is the normal state. Professor Gray, Mr. Darwin, and others, have made elaborate studies of this phase of plant life, and unite in assuring us that the stems and branches of growing plants, under the influence of light and other vital excitants, are constantly in motion, describing many forms of curves and angular figures in their movements. The motion is usually very slow, and can be detected only as the motion of the hour hand of a clock is, by marking its place at different times.

Climbing plants illustrate this power of motion in a more conspicuous and remarkable way than any other. Those most notable for this quality are the regular twiners, such as the Hop and the Morning-Glory, and those which climb by means of twining tendrils, or leaf-stalks, as the Passion-Flower and the Clematis. It has been observed that if a regular twiner be allowed to grow up higher than its support, the upper joints will "lop over" and bend outward, horizontally, and then commence to swing around the point of last attachment, like the hands of a clock; the end joints of a Hop plant, for instance, were observed to make no less than thirty-seven such revolutions, at an average of two and a half hours for each. This is not caused by a twisting of the stem of the plant, as might be supposed, for the joints would not be twisted more than two or three times, even after so many revolutions, and in many plants the twisting is in a direction opposite to the motion. It has been found that the revolving end of the plant actually rolls over as it swings around, so that what is the upper side when the plant is in one



#### THE WILD CLEMATIS.

point of the circle will be the under side when it is at the opposite point. The number and rate of the revolutions of the free ends of twiners greatly vary in different species.

This reaching out and swinging around serves the purpose of finding a support to twine about, if there is one within the radius of its widest possible circle. If at any point it impinges against an object, like an upright stick or string, of course the motion is arrested, but that part of the growing stem which is beyond the point of contact, continues to swing around and so coils up about the new support.

It is said by the botanists that this "swinging around the circle" of the twiners is caused by the process of growth going on in the cells of the stem, not on all sides simultaneously, but on one side at a time. The rapid increase of the cells of, we will say, the north side of the stem, while those on the south side remain at rest, would have the effect to make the stem longer on that side than on the other, and bend it over toward the south. Now if this growth process creeps slowly around toward the east, the stem will be slowly bent and rolled over more and more toward the west, and, as the process continues quite around the plant, the extremity of the stem will be made to swing around through the whole compass of the circle. It is evident that this swinging motion of the end of the stem must continue as long as the process of growth goes on, in the internodes, and must stop in respect to any given internode, when the growth process stops in it. So we observe that consecutively, joint after joint, in the older parts of the plant, becomes stiff and immovable, while the newer parts continue the motion. But this exactly adapts it to the needs of the situation, for the growing



#### THE WILD CLEMATIS.

and the motion enable it to twine and climb, and the stiffening of the internodes at last keeps it in place as it is wound closely about its support.

The tendril and leaf climbers have those organs endowed with a sensitiveness or irritability which causes the tendril or the petiole of the leaf to wind about any small object which it is made to be in contact with for any considerable length of time. The end of the stem of some of the leaf climbers, the Clematis, for example, has the power of rotatory motion, like the true twiners. The sensitive leaves and tendrils of all have this power in a marked degree. When a tendril, reaching out and swinging around, comes in contact with some small object, it directly winds about it three or four times, and then begins to coil up from the middle, the coils running both ways, in opposite directions, thus compensating for each other, and not twisting the tendril off. This has the effect to draw the stem up near its support, and, at the same time, to fasten it by what is in effect an elastic cord. The coiled tendril is like a coiled wire spring, which allows the stem to have considerable lateral motion under the pressure of the wind, or other force, and yet suffers no injury itself, by straining or breaking, as it would if it remained a straight, "taut" string.

A remarkably curious fact is thus noted by Dr. Gray: "In revolving tendrils the most wonderful thing to remark is the way in which they avoid winding themselves around the stem they belong to. The active tendrils are, of course, near the top of the stem or branch. The growing summit beyond the tendril, now seeking a support, is often turned over to one side, so that the tendril, revolving almost horizontally, has a clear sweep above



#### THE WILD CLEMATIS.

it. But as the growing stem lengthens and rises, the tendril might strike against it and be wound up around it. It never does. If we watch the slender Passion-Flower, which shows the revolving so well in a sultry day, we may see, with wonder, that when a tendril, sweeping horizontally, comes around so that its base nears the parent stem rising above it, it stops short, rises stiffly upright, moves on in this position until it passes by the stem, then rapidly comes down again to the horizontal position, and moves on so until it again approaches, and again avoids the impending obstacle."

The Clematis is a true leaf climber, although most of the species have the power of revolving their ultimate branches and internodes to a certain limited extent. Darwin gives the rate in several of the species as being from three to five hours. The sensitive petiole will clasp the small object which it is brought in contact with, in a period varying from a few hours to one or two days.

The behavior of these twining leaf-stalks cannot fail to be a matter of deep interest to any observant lover of nature. They seem to be incapable of discriminating as to what they will twine around, in this respect differing from the tendrils of the Passion-Flower, described above, for they will frequently be found coiled tightly round the other branches or leaves of the parent stem. It is an interesting and beautiful plant when growing, and not less so when matured and ripened, for,—



THE WILD CLEMATIS.

When the autumn days are here,  
And the woods of autumn burn,  
Then her leaves are black and sere,  
Quick with early frosts to turn!  
As the golden summer dies,  
So her silky green has fled,  
And the smoky clusters rise  
As from fires of sacrifice,—  
Sacred incense to the dead!

*D. R. G.*







THE SWAMP ROSE.

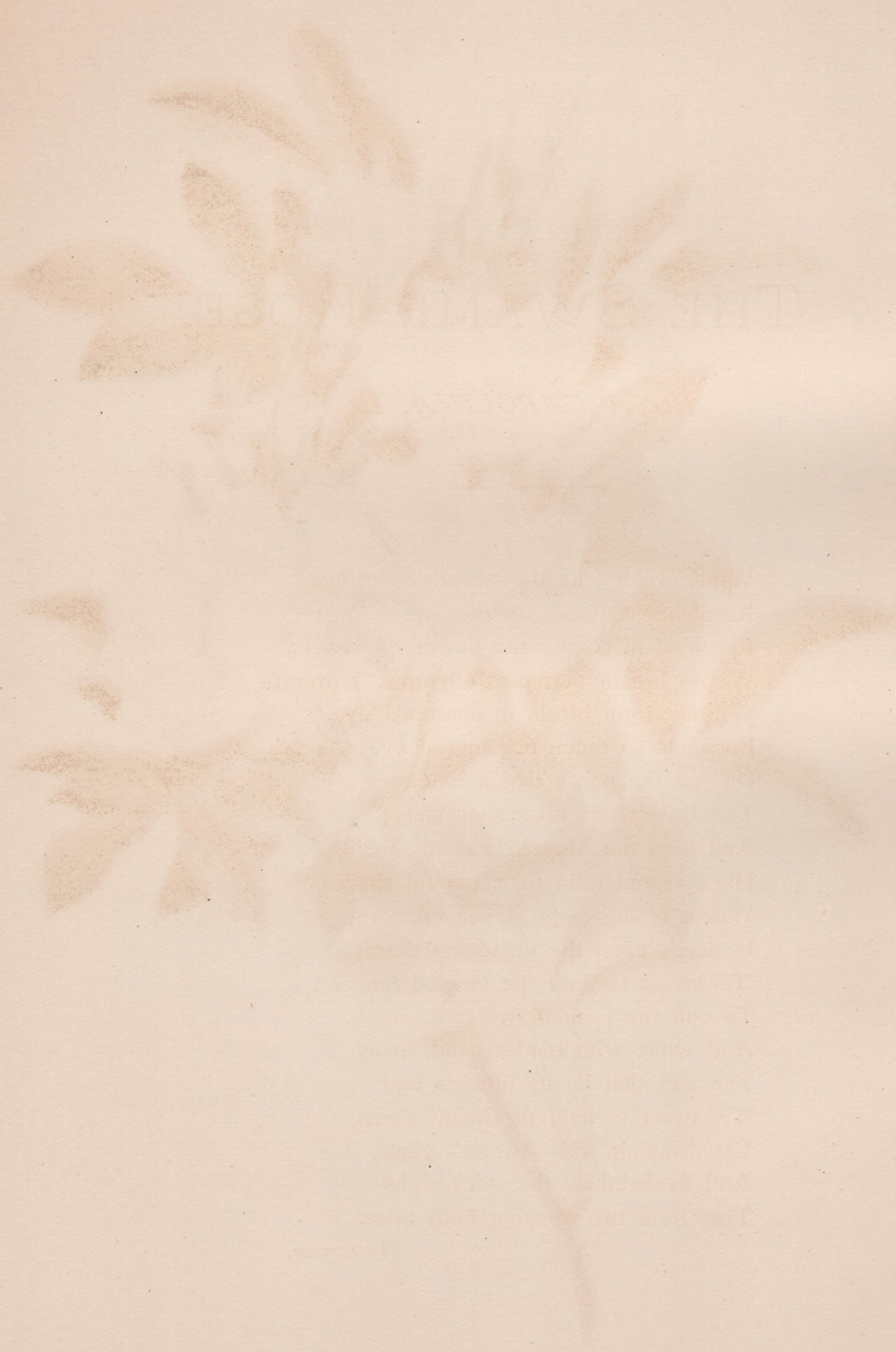














# THE SWAMP ROSE.

*ROSA CAROLINA, L.*

---

While we invoke the wreathed spring,  
Resplendent Rose, to thee we'll sing;  
Resplendent Rose, the flower of flowers,  
Whose breath perfumes Olympus' bowers;  
Whose virgin blush, of chasten'd dye,  
Enchants so much our mortal eye;  
Oft has the poet's magic tongue  
The Rose's fair luxuriance sung;  
And long the Muses, heavenly maids,  
Have reared it in their tuneful shades.  
When, at the early glance of morn,  
It sleeps upon the glistening thorn,  
'Tis sweet to dare the tangled fence,  
To cull the timid floweret thence,  
And wipe, with tender hand, away  
The tear that on its blushes lay!  
'Tis sweet to hold the infant stems,  
Yet dripping with Aurora's gems,  
And fresh inhale the spicy sighs  
That from the weeping buds arise.

*Anacreon.*



#### THE SWAMP ROSE.

WE have two wild roses, quite widely, I might say almost universally, distributed in this country, east of the Mississippi River. One is named above, and the other is the Dwarf Wild Rose. The latter is the more fragrant, but is in no other sense the rival of the other. The Swamp Rose differs from its smaller companion, not only in its greater size, but in having the under side of its leaves of an ashen-gray color, while the upper is a brilliant green, and also in having decidedly hooked spines, or thorns, while those of the Dwarf Rose are straight. It grows to a height of four to six feet, generally on low ground, and flowers profusely from June through the summer. In the fall the orange-brown foliage and the brilliant red fruit make it an extremely attractive shrub, and oftentimes no inconsiderable element in the coloring of the autumn landscape.

Mr. Sprague has made such an exquisite picture of this most charming wild flower, that I do not deem it important to make particular mention of the details of its color, form, and habits.

Of all the flowers of the field, none has had so large a share of human regard as the Rose. If Anacreon could write two thousand five hundred years ago of the poets then ancient to him,—

“Oft has the Poet’s magic tongue  
The Rose’s fair luxuriance sung,”

certainly we ought to be able to find volumes of rose poetry in our larger inheritance from the lengthening ages of the past. And we may. In song and legend, in political association and social and religious rite, the Rose has an abundant history.

It was cultivated and admired in Babylon and Jerusalem more than a thousand years before the Christian era. Homer



#### THE SWAMP ROSE.

uses its brilliant colors to paint the picture of the rising sun. Aurora, according to this poet, has fingers of roses, and perfumes the air with these flowers. The Rose was consecrated to Aurora, or the Morning, and also to Harpocrates, the patron of silence, of which it is considered the symbol. Hence arose the expression, *sub rosa*, under the rose, which signifies that all things said under that ban should be held as private, and not to be repeated. It was a not infrequent custom to suspend a rose over the table in the banqueting hall, to remind the guests that all utterances there should be considered *sub rosa*.

The miraculous and divine origin of the Rose is represented in many fables of the mythologies. The most significant is, perhaps, the following, for it shows how much the Greeks must have prized and admired a flower which they called in the whole court of Heaven to help create. A favorite Nymph of Flora's royal train, whose rare beauty was equalled only by her purity and goodness, was one day found dead. The Queen of Flowers thereupon solicited the aid of all the Olympic deities to change the "inanimate clay" into a flower which should fitly commemorate on earth a divine creature so sweet and beautiful. So Apollo lent the life-giving power of his beams, Bacchus bathed it in nectar, Vertumnus gave it perfume, while his wife, Pomona, added fruit. Flora herself gave it its diadem of flowers, and called it a Rose. The Greeks were never forgetful of Flora's wish to have this beautiful creation of her tender love and her consummate skill considered and honored as the Queen of Flowers. And I confess I do not think Nature has ever, before or since, produced a plant which could successfully dispute the royal title with the Rose.



#### THE SWAMP ROSE.

There is a strange, though probably an unintentional suggestiveness in this old fable, which gives Vertumnus and Pomona both a hand in its creation, in the fact that the Rose belongs and gives its name to that order of plants which furnishes us with all our common fruits, from the apple and pear to the raspberry and plum.

The presence of thorns on the Rose tree, which has given rise to the proverb, "No rose without its thorn," is accounted for in different ways in the ancient authors and legends. Basil, a theologian of the early Christian centuries, says it is a result of the fall of man, and the corruption of the world by the human race. A poet has put the same thought in a more fanciful shape, in telling how, when Eve sought to come at the tree of the forbidden fruit, she ruthlessly trampled on the Rose, which, with other plants, fenced the sacred tree about, and, at this violence, and on account of its sense of shame at Eve's conduct,

"The native white its petals left,  
Which, blushing, turned to red."

This accounts also for the color and true beauty of the Rose, and to many will be, at least, some compensation for the unfortunate performance of our respected maternal ancestor. But the thorns came by the same cause, for,

"Ere this event of sin and shame,  
No prickly thorns were found;  
But now they burst from every stem,  
And with the rose abound."

Another poet has given a still more poetical, and quite as



#### THE SWAMP ROSE.

probable, reason for the thorns and the brilliant red of the Rose, in the following legend. Cupid, coming along one bright morning, found a splendid white rose, which he stood gazing upon with rapturous delight. But, as the flower itself relates, unknown to him,

“ It chanced a bee was busy there,  
Searching for its fragrant fare;  
And Cupid, stooping too, to sip,  
The angry insect stung his lip —  
And gushing from the ambrosial cell,  
One bright drop on my bosom fell!  
Weeping, to his mother he  
Told the tale of treachery;  
And she her vengeful boy to please,  
Strung his bow with captive bees;  
But placed upon my slender stem  
The poisoned sting she plucked from them:  
And none, since that eventful morn,  
Have found the flower without a thorn.”

Since the earliest times, Roses have been used in social fêtes and festivals, for crowns and garlands; in religious rites for decorating the altars, shrines, and images of the gods; and in funeral ceremonies, and memorial services, by being scattered freely upon the coffin, or planted by the grave, and in after years heaped upon the monument or wreathed about the urn holding the precious dust. Thus are we but reviving an old, old custom, when we with reverent hand place a wreath upon the resting-place of our “Martyred Dead” on “Decoration Day,” or when we pay the tribute of private grief to departed loved ones by bringing garlands of fragrant flowers to lay upon the green sod above their still forms.



### THE SWAMP ROSE.

"Bring flowers to crown the cup and lute, —  
Bring flowers — the bride is near;  
Bring flowers to soothe the captive's cell,  
Bring flowers to strew the bier!"

The Rose has given its name to one of the sacred utensils of the Roman Church, the rosary, which is specially dedicated to the Virgin Mary, each of the small beads marking an *Ave Maria*, and each of the large ones a *Pater Noster* recited. The name is supposed to have come from the fact that the Virgin is often called the *rosa mystica*, or "Mystic Rose" of the Church.

"Our Lady of the Rosary!  
What name can be so sweet,  
As what we call thee when we place  
Our chaplets at thy feet."

She is also called "Saint Mary of the Rose."

First, take these crimson roses,  
How red their petals glow!  
Red as the blood of Jesus,  
Which heals our sin and woe.

See in each heart of crimson  
A deeper crimson shine!  
So in the foldings of our hearts  
Should glow a love divine.

*Adelaide Proctor.*

The political, economical, and medicinal history of the Rose, would each make a chapter of itself. In the days of chivalry the gallant knights often decorated their shields or helmets with roses, "implying that sweetness should always be the companion



#### THE SWAMP ROSE.

of courage, and that beauty was the only prize worthy of valor."

The "Wars of the Roses," so called, make one of the bloodiest and saddest pages of English history. The Count of Egmont, the founder of the House of Lancaster, as early as 1277 adopted for his heraldic device the Red Rose, which Thibaut, Count of Brie, a French nobleman, had brought home with him from Syria, in the wars of the Crusades. It may have been a Damask Rose, which is a native of Damascus, and, therefore, of Syria. The House of York had adopted the White Rose for its heraldic emblem, and the thirty years of civil war between the powerful factions contending for the crown, drenched England with the best blood of the realm. Nor was the sanguinary strife ended until the two rival houses were united in one by the marriage of Henry VII. with Elizabeth of York, and the Tudor sovereigns took as their badge a Rose, half red, half white, emblematical of the union of the rival houses. This has continued to be the recognized emblem of England in the same way that the Thistle and Shamrock (probably the wood-sorrel, not the clover) have been dedicated to Scotland and Ireland, respectively.

Many almost incredible stories are told of the extravagant luxury and magnificence of the Roman emperors and other eastern despots, in connection with the use and cultivation of the Rose,—of the profuse, almost boundless, employment of them in ministering to their pleasure and luxuriousness. Some of them are said to have slept on pillows of rose-leaves. And it is related that Cleopatra, in a feast given to Mark Antony and his friends, one day had the floor of the banqueting hall bedded in roses a foot and a half deep, and held down by a fine net-



#### THE SWAMP ROSE.

work, so that the company walked upon them, a most costly and fragrant carpet. Nero, at a single feast, given at Baia, spent one hundred thousand dollars on roses alone. The ability to command such a great supply of these beautiful but short-lived flowers implies that a great deal of labor and skill was expended in the cultivation of them, and that immense gardens and great fields were devoted to their growth in the neighborhood of the capitals and centres of civilization of the ancient world.

Of the Golden Rose, which it was the custom for the pope to send to the most wise or virtuous prince among all who held allegiance to the church,—of the attar of roses, the most delicate, precious, and costly perfume known to the arts, of the manner of making it, and of the great prices paid for it,—and of many other such things I must not take the space to write. But of the sentimental symbolism of the Rose, I must be permitted just to make mention in closing. From time immemorial it has been dedicated to the strongest and noblest passion which dwells in the human heart,—Love,—and it is everywhere reckoned the fittest emblem of a fair and virtuous maidenhood, at once the object and the shrine of the tenderest and purest love.

The Rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,  
And Hope is brightest when it dawns from fears:  
The Rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,  
And Love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.

*Scott.*



THE SWAMP ROSE.

Dear flower of Heaven and Love! thou glorious thing,  
That lookest out the garden nooks among;  
Rose, that art ever fair and ever young;  
Was it some angel or invisible wing  
Hovered around thy fragrant sleep, to fling  
His glowing mantle of sunset hues  
O'er thy unfolding petals, wet with dews  
Such as the flower-fays to Titania bring?  
O flower of thousand memories and dreams,  
That take the heart with faintness while we gaze  
On the rich depths of thy inwoven maze;  
From the rich banks of Eden's blessed streams  
I dreamed thee brought, of brighter days to tell,  
Long passed, but promised yet with us to dwell.

*C. P. Cranch.*







THE WATER LILY.















# THE WATER LILY.

*NYMPHÆA ODORATA, Ait.*

---

“Mark where transparent waters glide,  
Soft flowing o’er tranquil bed;  
There, cradled on the dimpling tide,  
Nymphæa rests her lovely head;

But, conscious of the earliest beam,  
She rises from her humid nest,  
And sees reflected on the stream  
The virgin whiteness of her breast—

Till the bright day-star to the west  
Declines, in Ocean’s surge to lave;  
Then, folded in her modest vest  
She slumbers on the rocking wave.”

THE sweet-scented Water Lily is a native of this country, and is one of our finest contributions to the floral treasures of the world. But its nearest living relative, the *N. leuca* of the Greeks, the *N. alba* of the modern botanist, has long been known and admired by both naturalist and poet. It is mentioned by Pliny, and some of the very earliest Greek writers. It differs



### THE WATER LILY.

from the more elegant flowers of our ponds and still-running streams only in being somewhat smaller, less odoriferous, and in having more strongly veined leaves.

The genus was christened by the Greeks, and derives its name from the old belief that Nymphs and Naiads dwell in, and preside over, gently flowing streams, and the limpid waters of placid lakelets, where

“Broad white lilies lie tremulously,  
And starry river-buds glimmer by,  
And around them the soft stream doth glide and dance  
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.”

The species is widely distributed in this country, and is a universal favorite with all classes. It certainly deserves all the admiration it receives, for it is not easy to imagine a flower which combines any rarer charms of form and fragrance than are found in this floral Nymph. Although it seldom departs from its typical color of pure white, inclosing the golden yellow, or as Sir Walter Scott describes it growing in Loch Katrine,—

“The water lily to the light  
Her chalice reared of silver bright,”

yet, she sometimes, in this country, deigns to paint her fair face with a blush of delicate pink. The ponds and lakes of Cape Cod, and especially those about Falmouth, Massachusetts, are famous for these strange blossoms of the Water Lily, which seem to have caught some of the glow of the rosy morn upon the pure white of their expanded petals.

There are few flowers, native to our fields and forests, which



### THE WATER LILY.

make a longer season of it with their blooming than the Water Lily. Says Colonel Higginson, an observer of rare accuracy, speaking of the Mountain Laurel and the Water Lily: "At the same time with this royalty of the woods, the queen of the water ascends her throne, for a reign as undisputed and far more prolonged. The extremes of the Water Lily in the vicinity of Boston, so far as I have known, are the 18th of June and the 13th of October,—a longer range than belongs to any other conspicuous wild flower, unless we except the Dandelion and the Houstonia."

The Water Lily is always associated with thoughts of cool and shady streams, and wood-bordered lakes, which, in glassy stillness, embosom in their depths a world of sky and clouds.

Oh, beautiful thou art,  
Thou sculpture-like and stately River-queen!  
Crowning the depths, as with the light serene,  
Of a pure heart.

Bright lily of the wave!  
Rising in fearless grace with every swell,  
Thou seem'st as if a spirit meekly brave,  
Dwelt in thy cell.

Lifting alike thy head  
Of placid beauty, feminine, yet free,  
Whether with foam or pictured azure spread,  
The waters be.

*Hemans.*

The Water Lily comes of a noble family, a family which can boast the classical and sacred Lotus of the storied Nile, and the royal and gigantic *Victoria regia* of the lordly Amazon, among



### THE WATER LILY.

its scions. Yet this gentle flower has a humble spirit; and, like a human soul which is both pure and wise, is content to rest upon the low level of its appointed place, and contribute only beauty and sweetness to the world's great treasury of good.

Though the Water Lily is not named in the following lines from Bryant, who was more truly nature's poet than any English-speaking writer, save Wordsworth, yet we cannot be mistaken in assuming that the "snow-white flower" which the "innocent child" held in its hand as the fittest emblem of its innocence was a white Water Lily.

Innocent child and snow-white flower!  
Well are ye paired in your opening hour.  
Thus should the pure and the lovely meet, —  
Stainless with stainless, and sweet with sweet.

White as those leaves, just blown apart;  
Are the folds of thy own young heart;  
Guilty passion and cankering care  
Never have left their traces there.

Artless one! though thou gazest now  
O'er the white blossom with earnest brow,  
Soon will it tire thy childish eye;  
Fair as it is, thou wilt throw it by.

Throw it aside in thy weary hour,  
Throw to the ground the fair white flower;  
Yet, as thy tender years depart,  
Keep that white and innocent heart.



THE MOCCASIN FLOWER.















# THE MOCCASIN FLOWER.

(LADY'S SLIPPER.)

*CYPRIPEDIUM ACAULE, Ait.*

---

Flowers, as the changing seasons roll along,  
Still wait on earth, and added beauties lend;  
Around the smiling Spring, a lovely throng,  
With eager rivalry her steps attend;  
Others with Summer's brighter glories blend:  
Some grace wild Autumn's more majestic mien;  
While some few lingering blooms the brow befriend  
Of hoary Winter, and with grace serene,  
Enwreath the king of Storms with mercy's tender sheen.

*Barton.*

Mysterious round! what skill, what force divine,  
Deep felt, in these appear! A simple train,  
Yet so delightful mix'd, with such kind art,  
Such beauty and beneficence combined;  
Shade, unperceived, so softening into shade;  
And all so forming one harmonious whole;  
That as they still succeed, they ravish still.  
But wandering oft, with brute unconscious gaze,  
Man marks not Thee, marks not the mighty hand  
That, ever busy, wheels the silent spheres;  
Works in the secret deep; shoots, streaming, thence,  
The fair profusion that o'erspreads the Spring.

*Thomson.*



#### THE MOCCASIN FLOWER.

It is worth while, however, to notice that "the fair profusion that o'erspreads the Spring" comes with something of the same definite regularity with which the "silent spheres" wheel their course through the heavens. These never miss an appointment, be they "silvery moon" or "blazing stars," by so much as a shade of a second. It was a fancy of Linnæus to construct a floral clock, or sundial, by planting a circle of flowers in the garden, whose time of opening should mark the hours of the day. Though, perhaps, they would not keep time to the fraction of a minute, yet,

"'Twas a lovely thought to mark the hours,  
As they floated in light away,  
By the opening and the folding flowers,  
That laugh to the summer's day."

There is a law which governs the yearly blooming of the plants, which is quite as orderly as that which assigns to them the hour of the day when they shall open and shut their brilliant eyes. Most careful botanists are acquainted with this habit of the plants which they study. Emerson says that Thoreau "thought that if waked up from a trance in a Concord swamp, he could tell by the plants what time of year it was within two days." No doubt he could, for he was a close observer of Nature's habits, and he had found out that what is lawless confusion to the uninstructed, is but an orderly profusion to him who is acquainted with the almost startling exactness of Nature's processes.

That day as they walked, Emerson says: "He looked for *Menyanthes*, 'Buck bean,' detected it across the wide pool, and on examination of the florets, decided that it had been in flower five days. He drew out of his breast-pocket his diary, and read



#### THE MOCCASIN FLOWER.

the names of all the plants that should bloom on this day, whereof he kept account, as a banker when his notes fall due: 'The *Cypripedium* not due till to-morrow.'

"'To-morrow' in these parts," says Higginson, "means about the 20th of May. It belongs," he continues, "to the family of Orchids, a high-bred race, fastidious in habits, sensitive as to abodes." Most Orchids are rare in our Northern Flora, and yet, he observes, as most who have gathered these charming plants must have often felt, that even this species, as abundant as it is, "retains the family traits in its person, and never loses its high-born air, and its delicate veining. I know a grove where it can be gathered by the hundreds, within a half-acre, and yet I can never divest myself of the feeling that each specimen is a choice novelty." It certainly is choice, if it is not a novelty.

It grows in both dry and damp woods, under evergreens and deciduous trees alike. I have found it plentiful in all these situations, about Taunton, Massachusetts; and my memory of its rare charms, as I gathered it by the streams on the northern spur of the Alleghany Mountains, in Western Pennsylvania, in my boyhood days, now more than thirty years ago, is as fresh and delightful as though it were but yesterday. I have taken it from the middle of May to near the end of June, and I do not doubt it may be found throughout the latter month.

To any who appreciate curious forms as well as graceful outlines and brilliant colors, there can be no wild flower of our woodlands more attractive than the pink Lady's Slipper. It certainly cannot be necessary that I should add a word of praise for the work of the artist, to any who have seen the plant as well as the picture. It speaks for itself.



#### THE MOCCASIN FLOWER.

I have had frequent occasion in these papers to note how the most beautiful flowers have become associated with the name or memory of the Blessed Virgin. Indeed, it seems to be a passion with the reverent children of the Church, to dedicate the most beautiful things of earth to Her, who, in their thought, is the most beautiful being in heaven. Our present flower is not an exception. While the generic name signifies Venus' Slipper, and Americans have called it the Moccasin Flower from its marked resemblance to the foot-covering of the Aborigines, the popular name given to the common species of France, *C. Calceolus*, is "Sabot de la Vierge," and "Soulier de Notre Dame," or "Our Lady's Slipper."

Like most of the Orchids, it has an arrangement of parts which renders it very difficult, if not impossible, to be fertilized by its own pollen. The stamens and pistils are united into a single organ called the "Column," which projects forward from the stem into the open space at the top and within the sack-like labellum, or "lip." The stamens lie back of the stigma in such a position that the pollen could not, except by the help of insects, or other artificial means, be transferred from the one to the other. But the flower is admirably contrived so as to solicit, and use, the help which such insects as bees and flies may bring to it. The large, gayly-colored, pendant bag, which makes the most conspicuous part of the flower, is opened with a narrow slit down the front, and the edges of the opening are turned inward. This forms a regular trap, easy to get into, but quite impossible to get out of, at least by the same door. The "busy bee," searching for toothsome morsels, easily penetrates to the interior of this floral sack through the narrow open door.



#### THE MOCCASIN FLOWER.

Once in, and satisfied, he looks about him for a way out. He finds it at last, but not by the way he came in. At the top of the flower, on either side of the "Column," he finds a passage into the open air, quite wide enough for a small but enterprising bee to push his way through. In doing this, however, he brushes against, and frequently carries away upon his hairy sides or back, the sticky pollen mass of the open anthers. Now, if he enters another flower of the same species, as he will be very likely to do, and in due time makes his exit through the only open door, he will certainly get some of this pollen on the stigmatic surface of that flower, and fertilize it. For the stigma is covered with minute papillæ, like the teeth of a hetchel, which project forward, and the pollen is effectually combed off him as he goes by. Notwithstanding this elaborate contrivance for fertilization, and this curious adaptation of means to that end, it remains true, as we are assured by good observers, that few plants are ever fertile, they being chiefly propagated by the root, which keeps its life from year to year.

This has, apparently, not been a favorite with the poets. Only one American songster has chanted its praises, so far as I know, and she has, I am glad to see, devoted her young muse mostly to our beautiful wild flowers.

Yet shy and proud among the forest flowers,  
In maiden solitude,  
Is one whose charm is never wholly ours,  
Nor yielded to our mood;  
One true-born blossom, native to our skies,  
We dare not claim as kin, —  
Nor frankly seek for all that in it lies,  
The Indian's Moccasin.



THE MOCCASIN FLOWER.

Graceful and tall the slender drooping stem,  
    With the broad leaves below,  
Shapely the flower so lightly poised between,  
    And warm her rosy glow;  
Yet loneliest rock-strewn haunts are all her bent;  
    She heeds no soft appeal,  
And they alone who dare a rude ascent,  
    Her equal charm may feel.  
For lightly ever falls the tireless foot,  
    That's only shod with flowers!  
No lagging step outruns the happy days, —  
    Our tread is soft as rain;  
With careless joy we tread the woodland ways,  
    And reach her broad domain.  
Thro' sense of strength and beauty, free as air,  
    We feel our savage kin, —  
And thus alone, with conscious meaning, wear  
    The Indian's Moccasin!

*Elaine Goodale.*



THE PURPLE AZALEA.















#### THE PURPLE AZALEA.

mother tongue, and, "Beauty is its own excuse for being," has long since passed into the current coin of daily speech; also, because it describes a flower so nearly related to the Azalea, that something with a greater botanical definiteness than a poem must be used to distinguish them apart. Indeed, I am inclined to think that it may be the Azalea after all that was in the poet's eye as he wrote, for his expression, "its leafless blooms," exactly translates the specific name of our plant, *nudiflora*. It must be said, however, that it also accurately describes the Rhodora.

The Purple Azalea, of which Mr. Sprague has given us a most exquisite representation, is one of the most showy and splendid of the native flowering shrubs of our forests. It grows from two to six feet high, in swamps, from Massachusetts and New York to Virginia, and southward. Blooming in April and May, when the woods are comparatively bare of both foliage and flowers, it is all the better able to set off its brilliant and showy flowers with dazzling effect, against the surrounding dulness.

There are many varieties of the flower, ranging all the way from flesh-color to pink and purple. They not seldom also vary in the number of stamens produced, sometimes exhibiting ten or more.

No other American poet has enshrined this spring beauty in verse, so far as I know, except the young songstress of the Berkshire hills, to whose pen I have been indebted for several charming things in the pages of this book, Miss Dora Read Goodale.



THE PURPLE AZALEA.

WILD AZALEA.

O newest longing, O most dear desire,  
Unsatisfied, unknown!  
All the broken woodland path  
Little light or color hath,  
Save the glory breaking in  
Through the depth of tender green, —  
We are here alone!

Whence is the sacred music of the wood,  
The clear, the tireless tone?  
Thro' misty ways we blindly grope  
To catch the earliest signs of hope,  
Sun or shade or restless wind,  
Whatso pleasures we may find, —  
We are here alone!

A sudden presence stirs the solemn wood,  
A secret not its own,  
A youthful light, an open grace,  
An equal strength in every place,  
And, far up the steep ascent,  
Warmth and quick desire are lent  
Where we wait alone!

Oh, far away in yonder leafy copse  
The wandering thrush has flown,  
And close along the wooded steep  
We know an influence passing deep,  
The Summer light, the Summer tone,  
The rare Azalea makes her own, —  
And we are not alone!







THE MAY-FLOWER.















# THE MAY-FLOWER.

(TRAILING ARBUTUS.)

*EPIGÆA REPENS, L.*

---

Sad Mayflower! watched by winter stars,  
And nursed by winter gales,  
With petals of the sleeted spars,  
And leaves of frozen sails!

What had she in those dreary hours,  
Within her ice-rimmed bay,  
In common with the wild-wood flowers,  
The first sweet smiles of May?

Yet, "God be praised" the Pilgrim said,  
Who saw the blossoms peer  
Above the brown leaves, dry and dead,  
"Behold our Mayflower here !

God wills it: here our rest shall be,  
Our years of wandering o'er;  
For us the Mayflower of the sea  
Shall spread her sails no more."

O sacred flowers of faith and hope,  
As sweetly now as then  
Ye bloom on many a birchen slope,  
In many a pine-dark glen.



#### THE MAY-FLOWER.

Behind the sea-wall's rugged length,  
Unchanged, your leaves unfold,  
Like love behind the manly strength  
Of the brave hearts of old.

*Whittier.*

A SINGULAR interest to New Englanders attaches to this flower, which many circumstances conspire to enhance. It is associated with the earliest and most melancholy days of our Colonial history. There is a coincidence with the name of the ship which brought the brave little band of Pilgrims to our inhospitable, "stern and rock-bound coast." It is said to have been the first floral token by which kindly Nature gave them greeting in the sunny days of spring, after that dreadful winter of starvation, sickness, and death. Mr. Whittier's poem, above, alludes to this, and intimates that they inhaled a little feeling of assurance and hope from the sweet breath of this earliest vernal bloom.

It shares with the Hepatica the honor of being the first flowers to come forth from the newly warmed earth, after the frosts and storms of our hard New England winter, sometimes even, putting forth its pink petals out from under the very edge of a lingering snowdrift. Not seldom its cup is filled with the white crystals of our too frequently belated snow showers.

It is a very humble plant. It grows prone, close down upon the earth, as its generic name signifies. It must be sought for with some diligence. But when once found, one feels that its freshness, beauty, and sweetness, together combine to make it a prize well worth long searching. A Taunton poet tells the story of its gathering in these charming lines:



### THE MAY-FLOWER.

In April when the days were bright,  
And growing longer in their scope,  
When buds were shaking off their sleep,  
And all the airs were full of hope;

By crooked footpaths faintly traced,  
Our way along the fields we took;  
Climbed broken fence and loosened wall,  
And crossed the shallow, gliding brook.

We reached the hills, beneath whose base  
The river flows with ceaseless sound,  
And knowing the enchanted spot,  
Knelt with our faces to the ground.

For, those who come with lofty tread,  
And careless undiscerning eyes,  
May often go with empty hands,  
Nor find this treasure where it lies.

We brushed the withered leaves away,  
Old remnants of a worn-out year,  
And shouted with ecstatic glee,  
"The flower is here! the flower is here!"

*M. E. N. Hathaway.*

And you must know "the enchanted spot," if you find the Trailing Arbutus. It does not grow everywhere. It is choice and peculiar about its "local habitation." Concerning some peculiarities of the plant, Mr. Higginson offers some remarks in "The Procession of the Flowers," an *Atlantic* essay, published twenty years ago, quite well worth quoting.

"There is always some single chosen nook which you might almost cover with your handkerchief, where each flower seems to bloom earliest, without variation, year by year. I know one such



#### THE MAY-FLOWER.

place for Hepatica, a mile northeast, another for May-flower two miles southwest; and each year the whimsical creature is in bloom on that little spot, where not another flower can be found open through the whole country round. Accidental as the choice may appear, it is undoubtedly based on laws more eternal than the stars; yet why all subtle influences conspire to bless that undistinguishable knoll no man can say."

He makes the same observation concerning the singular and apparently erratic distribution of color in these two species. "There are," he says, "certain localities, near by, where the Hepatica is all but white, and the May-flower is sumptuous in pink; yet it is not traceable to wet or dry, sun or shadow, and no agricultural chemistry can dissolve the secret. Why can one recognize the Plymouth May-flower as soon as seen by its wondrous depth of color? Does it blush with triumph to see how Nature has outwitted the Pilgrims, and even succeeded in preserving her deer, like an English Duke, still maintaining the deepest woods in Massachusetts precisely where those sturdy emigrants first began their clearings?"

Of late years the people of the Old Colony country, dwelling in the vicinity of the great woods of Plymouth and the Cape, collect great numbers of these beautiful early flowers and send them to their friends at a distance, through the mails. They are also wrought into bouquets and floral designs, and peddled on railway trains by the thrifty youngsters of that region, or sent to the floral marts for sale in the great cities. They have a marked faculty for keeping long open, when once in bloom, and never seem to lose their wonderful fragrance to the last.

The Trailing Arbutus is not confined to New England. It



#### THE MAY-FLOWER.

may be found in widely separated localities throughout the northern regions of the United States. I have a pleasant memory of an early morning walk, now more than twenty years ago, in the first fresh sunny days of April, to a certain pine grove in the valley of the great St. Lawrence, in search of these fragrant beauties. And I was richly rewarded, for I brought away my hands full of them.

Mr. W. H. Gibson, in a sketch called "A Winter Idyl," in "Pastoral Days," makes a most appreciative reference to this beautiful and much loved flower, with which we will take our leave of it.

"Then came a beautiful day like very spring. In all the trees the winter wounds bled with a quickened pulse. The elder-spiggots in the sugar-maples trickled all the day. But at night the north wind came again, and the earth was subdued beneath the frost. And so for weeks the north wind battled with the sun,

"Till at last the sweet Arbutus  
Nestling close on Nature's breast,  
Felt a throb, a warm pulsation,  
Rouse it from its dreamy rest.

Throwing wide its little portals  
From its coverlet of snow,  
It peeped forth from the leafy shelter  
Into a valley white below.

'Am I dreaming? Shall the winter  
Stifle and freeze my early breath?  
Nay! Hark! I hear the bluebird singing,  
"Spring has come!" he answereth.



THE MAY-FLOWER.

'Ah, frost-flower, in thy grotto yonder,  
Crystal sun-gem, white and clear,  
Thy reign must cease when I awaken;  
Farewell! pale bloom, thy fate draws near.  
Bleak Winter is thine,  
Love's Springtime is mine.'"



THE LONG-LEAVED ASTER.















# THE LONG-LEAVED ASTER.

*ASTER LONGIFOLIUS, Lamarck.*

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## AUTUMN.

With what a glory comes and goes the year!  
The buds of spring, those beautiful harbingers  
Of sunny skies and cloudless times, enjoy  
Life's newness, and earth's garniture spread out;  
And when the silver habit of the clouds  
Comes down upon the autumn sun, and with  
A sober gladness the old year takes up  
His bright inheritance of golden fruits,  
A pomp and pageant fill the splendid scene.

There is a beautiful spirit breathing now  
Its mellow richness on the clustered trees,  
And from a beaker full of richest dyes,  
Pouring new glory on the autumn woods,  
And dipping in warm light the pillared clouds.

Oh, what a glory doth this world put on  
For him who with a fervent heart goes forth  
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks  
On duties well performed, and days well spent!  
For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves,  
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teachings.  
He shall so hear the solemn hymn that Death  
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go  
To his long resting-place without a tear.

*Longfellow.*



#### THE LONG-LEAVED ASTER.

I SUSPECT it would be hard to say, on purely Darwinian grounds, or grounds of "natural selection," just how it came about that the whole season is full of flowers,—that summer and autumn equally with the spring have each their own peculiar floral treasures. It certainly seems to be the most natural thing that plants should blossom in the spring and early summer, so as to have most of the season yet before them in which to fully ripen, and then distribute their seeds. Yet it remains true that a considerable number of our most beautiful flowers are, so to say, left over, wherewith to adorn the glowing noontides of August, and the still, hazy, dreamy days of September and October, splendid with a singular golden light. Then is the time for the innumerable blue and purple Asters, the Golden Rod, and the marvellous azure of the Fringed Gentian, all mingled with the unequalled splendors of our American forests, dressed in their many-colored autumnal garb.

Walled in with fire on either hand  
I walk the lonely wood-road through;  
The maples flame above my head,  
And spaces whence the wind has shed  
About my feet the living red,  
Are filled with broken blue.

And crowding close along the way  
The purple Asters blossom free;  
In full profusion, far and wide,  
They fill the path on every side,  
In loose confusion multiplied  
To endless harmony!



#### THE LONG-LEAVED ASTER.

And still beside the shadowy glen  
She holds the color of the skies;  
Along the purpling wayside steep  
She hangs her fringes passing deep,  
And meadows drowned in happy sleep  
Are lit by starry eyes!

*Dora Read Goodale.*

The genus Aster, which is certainly one of the most beautiful of the order Compositæ to which it belongs, contains upwards of one hundred and fifty species, most of which are natives of the American continent. Gray, in his Manual, gives thirty-eight as indigenous to the eastern United States, more than half of which are to be found in New England.

The Asters may be distinguished from other plants of the order by certain easily observed characteristics. The flower of a composite plant is made up of a considerable number, often of a very great number, of florets packed closely together in the disk or cone of the blossom. These florets have the essential parts of a flower, stamens, pistil, and ovule, but neither petals nor sepals. Usually, however, the border of this compound flower is decorated with a row of strap-shaped, more or less brilliantly-colored, petals. These may belong to the outer row of florets, or they may not. In Asters they do. The calyx is compound, composed of several rows of green scales, which overlap each other like the scales on a fish. The receptacle, or the base on which all the minute flowers are fixed, is a flat disk indented with little pits. The ripened seed has for a crown a single row of simple, slender, white bristles.

In some Asters the flowers form an umbrella-shaped cluster at the top of the plant; others are arranged on short stems



#### THE LONG-LEAVED ASTER.

along the main axis of the plant, forming a kind of spike or raceme, while others, like the one before us, take a middle form, and present a corymbose panicle.

It has been observed that all the little flowers, which make up the blossom of a composite plant, do not bloom, or come to perfection, at the same time. But, beginning in the middle, they blossom in successive circles outward to the margin, or, reversing this order, blossom from the outer row inward. The first is called the centrifugal and the second the centripetal order of inflorescence. To the latter order the Asters belong.

*Aster longifolius* is common along the banks of streams and in damp places throughout New England. It grows to the height of from one to three feet, and flowers in late summer or autumn. The word "Aster" means a star, and refers to the circle of colored petals which radiate from the central purple or brown disk of the flower. Among the Greeks it was the common name for many other plants of the Compositæ besides those of the true Aster genus as we now know it.

To dwellers in our land it is always associated with memories of departing summer, and the golden harvests and rare beauties of our autumnal days. Its first blossoming tells us in no uncertain words that summer is ending, and the chill rigor of Death is even now creeping up through Nature's frame. But the woodside Rambler will meet it still in the late November days, bravely holding its own against frost, and icy rain, and bleak winds, looking up cheerfully with its clear blue eye, under all the depressions of leaden skies, brown fields, and bare, stark forest trees.

For Whittier to see the picture which is painted in these



#### THE LONG-LEAVED ASTER.

lines he must take a very late, as well as the "Last Walk in Autumn."

Along the river's summer walk,  
The withered tufts of Asters nod;  
And trembles on its arid stalk  
The hoar plume of the golden-rod.  
And on a ground of sombre fir,  
The azure-studded juniper,  
The silver birch its buds of purple shows,  
And scarlet berries tell where bloomed the sweet wild rose!

I cannot more fittingly close this volume of "Beautiful Wild Flowers" than by quoting the words of Bryant, that truest poet of Nature, as he has pictured with deathless pencil the sad ending of the Floral Year in

#### THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS.

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,  
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere,  
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;  
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread;  
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,  
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood  
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?  
Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race of flowers  
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.  
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain  
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.



THE LONG-LEAVED ASTER.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,  
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;  
But on the hills the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,  
And the yellow sun-flower by the brook, in autumn beauty stood,  
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,  
And the brightness of their smile was gone, from upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes a calm mild day, as still such days will come,  
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;  
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,  
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,  
The south wind searches for the flowers, whose fragrance late he bore,  
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.







